

## 2026 UC ANR Cooperative Extension Position Advisor

**Developed and proposed by:** Rita Clemons, Area Director for Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties, Science Literacy and Critical Thinking Program Team (Steven Worker). Supported by the Statewide 4-H Program (Kimberly Holmes) and the Positive Youth Development and 4-H Program Team (Nathaniel Caeton).

**Position title:** Area 4-H Youth Development Advisor for STEM Career Pathways serving Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties

**Headquarter location and coverage area:** The position will serve Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties and will be headquartered in one of the three UCCE county offices, with final location determined by county capacity, travel feasibility, and regional partner access. These counties share an aligned supervisory structure and common needs, including rebuilding 4-H academic leadership, expanding equitable college and career readiness, connecting youth to STEM career pathways, and stewarding the SoCal 4-H Beyond Ready opportunity.

**Position overview, briefly describe:** (a) The Advisor will develop an applied research and Extension education program focused on positive youth development, STEM career pathways, college and career readiness, workforce development, youth leadership, and civic/community engagement. The Advisor will work across school, afterschool, community, postsecondary, and workforce settings through curriculum development, program evaluation, educator professional development, and regional partnership-building. (b) A minimum of a master's degree is required in youth development, human development, education, STEM education, community development, or a closely related field. Experience conducting applied research, evaluation, and youth education programs is required. Experience with culturally responsive youth development, STEM learning, college and career readiness, expanded learning, volunteer development, and community partnerships is strongly desired. (c) The Advisor will report administratively to the UCCE Area Director and programmatically to the Statewide 4-H Program. The Advisor will work with the Area Director, county 4-H staff, 4-H regional program coordinators, 4-H volunteers, the Statewide 4-H Director, the Positive Youth Development and 4-H Program Team, the Science Literacy and Critical Thinking Program Team, and relevant workgroups focused on STEM learning, college and career readiness, workforce development, and youth thriving.

**Justification:** There is a critical and immediate need for dedicated 4-H Advisor coverage in Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. This position addresses three urgent issues: (1) rebuilding 4-H academic leadership across one of California's largest youth-serving regions; (2) expanding equitable access to applied STEM, college and career readiness, and workforce pathways; and (3) connecting youth to regional career opportunities through hands-on, community-based learning. The position aligns directly with *UC ANR Strategic Vision 2040* priorities for thriving people and communities, economic prosperity, and systemic inequities.

*Youth population and education:* Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties together enroll more than 1.2 million K-12 students. The region includes 422,351 students in Orange County, 394,230 in San Bernardino County, and 418,422 in Riverside County. High school graduation rates are strong but reveal a need for college and career readiness. Riverside County's four-year cohort graduation rate was 93%, Orange County's was approximately 92%, and San Bernardino County's was reported at 88%, compared with a statewide rate of 87.5%. Gaps persisted for foster youth (76%), students with disabilities (83%), English learners (86%), and homeless youth (85%). The opportunity for

this Advisor is to help more youth move from high school completion to postsecondary readiness, A-G completion, STEM career awareness, and workforce pathways. For higher education, adult bachelor's degree attainment also varies sharply across the region, from 44% in Orange County to 23% in San Bernardino County and 26% in Riverside County, indicating uneven access to postsecondary opportunity and long-term economic mobility. The need is especially compelling in Inland Southern California where only 57% of Inland Empire high school graduates attend college, compared with 65% statewide.

*STEM workforce:* The workforce case is equally strong. Orange County's ICT/Digital Media sector included 89,656 jobs in 2022 and is projected to generate 8,544 annual openings, while the Inland Empire/Desert region has 824,400 middle-skill jobs and more than 107,500 projected annual middle-skill openings. Agriculture, water, and environmental technologies also remain important regional pathways: the Inland Empire/Desert sector is projected to grow 10.5% through 2029, and Riverside, San Bernardino, and Orange Counties together reported more than \$2.2 billion in 2024 agricultural production. This position would connect 4-H youth to these workforce needs through applied STEM, agricultural literacy, environmental systems, mentoring, and career exploration.

The position will also serve as the academic lead/PI for the SoCal 4-H Beyond Ready initiative, Imagine Science partnership, and Hoag Foundation matching gift opportunity. This is a time-sensitive opportunity to convert philanthropic investment into sustained UC ANR capacity. Dedicated academic leadership is needed to align program design, document outcomes, meet donor deliverables, strengthen regional partnerships, and build a sustainable Southern California 4-H STEM career pathways model.

**Extension:** The Advisor will provide Extension education to grow and strengthen 4-H Youth Development across Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. Key activities will include:

- Developing, implementing, and evaluating culturally responsive college and career readiness and STEM career pathway programs.
- Providing professional development and evaluation support to 4-H staff, volunteers, and youth leaders in positive youth development, experiential learning, overnight camping, inclusive practices, and program quality.
- Building partnerships with schools, expanded learning programs, community colleges, universities, workforce boards, STEM employers, and youth-serving organizations.
- Connecting youth to applied STEM learning, mentoring, internships, leadership experiences, and career exploration.
- Lead the SoCal 4-H Beyond Ready Initiative through program design, evaluation, outcome reporting, and donor stewardship.
- Expanding 4-H through clubs, camps, afterschool partnerships, school enrichment, SPIN clubs, short-term academies, community-based programs, and 4-H Grows Committees.

Primary clientele will include youth, families, adult 4-H volunteers, 4-H professionals, expanded learning educators, school and community college educators.

**Research:** The Advisor will develop an applied research program focused on how positive youth development programs strengthen college and career readiness and STEM career pathways for diverse youth. Key research areas include:

1. Culturally responsive college and career readiness programming for historically underrepresented youth.
2. STEM identity, science literacy, critical thinking, and career confidence in out-of-school time settings.

3. Youth pathway models that connect 4-H, community colleges, universities, employers, and community organizations.
4. Volunteer and educator capacity-building models that improve youth program quality and inclusion.
5. Youth leadership, civic engagement, ethnic-racial identity development, and social capital as readiness outcomes.
6. Evaluation of the SoCal 4-H Beyond Ready initiative, including reach, quality, outcomes, partnerships, and sustainability.

The research will respond to long-term issues such as changing workforce demands, artificial intelligence, automation, climate and environmental careers, biotechnology and health careers, digital equity, postsecondary affordability, and persistent inequities in STEM and college access. Findings will be shared through UC ANR publications, 4-H curricula, Extension guides, evaluation reports, practitioner toolkits, and peer-reviewed outlets such as the *Journal of Extension*, *Journal of Youth Development*, *California Agriculture*, *Afterschool Matters*, and related education journals.

**UC ANR network:** This position fills a major gap in UC ANR's youth development network by adding 4-H academic leadership in a large Southern California region currently lacking adequate advisor coverage. It will strengthen collaboration among the UC 4-H Statewide Program, Positive Youth Development and 4-H Program Team, Science Literacy and Critical Thinking Program Team, county 4-H staff, regional 4-H supervisors, and advisors working in nutrition, agriculture, natural resources, community development, environmental education, and youth-serving programs. The position will work with the emerging cohort of 4-H Advisors focused on college and career readiness while also adding distinctive expertise in college and career readiness, STEM career pathways, workforce development. It will complement existing 4-H advisors and specialists while expanding UC ANR's capacity to serve youth in a region with both high need and high partnership potential.

**Network external to UC ANR:** The Advisor will collaborate with county offices of education, school districts, expanded learning programs, community colleges, universities, workforce development boards, STEM employers, health and biotechnology partners, engineering and technology firms, youth-serving nonprofits, philanthropic partners, and local government agencies. Potential partners include Orange County Department of Education, Riverside County Office of Education, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, UC Riverside, UC Irvine, CSU San Bernardino, CSU Fullerton, Cal Poly Pomona, regional community colleges, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, Girls Inc., afterschool providers, workforce boards, and industry partners.

**Support:** The host county office will provide office space, computer and internet access, general office supplies, telephone, administrative support, and access to vehicles or mileage reimbursement. Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties will support regional coordination through county 4-H staff, volunteer networks, local partnerships, program sites, and meeting space where available.

**Other support:** The Advisor will pursue and steward additional support from the Hoag Foundation matching gift opportunity, Samuelli Foundation, UC ANR Development Services, National 4-H Council, USDA NIFA, California Department of Education expanded learning opportunities, workforce development sources, regional foundations, community college and university partners, and STEM industry sponsors. This position is well-positioned to convert a time-sensitive philanthropic opportunity into durable ANR capacity, documented youth outcomes, and long-term California 4-H growth.